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Connecticut Technology Council Announces Girls of Innovation Program

EAST HARTFORD, Conn. (January 29, 2009) – The Connecticut Technology Council (CTC) has launched Girls of Innovation to encourage women and girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math. This program has been endorsed by the CTC's Women of Innovation Planning Committee and is being officially announced at the 2009 Women of Innovation Awards Gala.

Girls of Innovation will focus on connecting students interested in technology fields with women actively working in the Connecticut technology community.

In the first year of the program, in collaboration with Connecticut *FIRST*, Girls of Innovation plans to establish Connecticut's first all-girl *FIRST* robotics team with women mentors.

Hank Gruner, Vice President of Programs at the Connecticut Science Center, understands the need to develop programs that will bring more middle school girls into science and technology fields. "The Connecticut Science Center feels strongly that this type of project is essential for Connecticut's future science and technology workforce," says Gruner, who hopes that the science center will soon be an active participant with the CT Technology Council in this type of effort.

"As chair of the CTC's Women of Innovation Planning Committee, I am thrilled that CTC is the catalyst to bring these powerful groups together to establish Girls of Innovation. The next generation--girls and boys--needs to recognize women as leaders in science and technology. That is a lesson best learned by experience. What better way to demonstrate progress than by bringing women mentors together with students with a common goal in a *FIRST* Robotics competition. Inspiring girls to continue their education, and ultimately pursue careers, in science and technology can only happen through exposure to creative and innovative thought in a fun and challenging setting, such as the *FIRST* Robotics competition.

By establishing Girls of Innovation, CTC is demonstrating once again its commitment to its mission, which benefits all of Connecticut's citizens. Girls of Innovation lives up to its name, and puts us further down the path toward a culture of innovation.”

Beth Alquist
Chair of the Women of Innovation Planning Committee
Partner at the law firm of Day Pitney LLP

“Spurring growth through creative invention will be a key objective of many companies in the next decade as it will provide the necessary fuel to address challenges in energy, healthcare, and global infrastructure realms. The solutions to these challenges will evolve and mature over many years and our bright and talented youth will drive the bus on this.

Our nation's mission to develop the next generation of leaders in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics will depend on stimulating interest from our university, high school, and even elementary / middle school pupils. This program is designed to galvanize our youth around invention and creative thought.

CTC is proud to provide fuel to this program as a stimulus for innovation in our next tier of leaders.”

Chris Kalish
Chair of the CTC board of Directors
Director of GE's EdgeLab

More information about this program can be found online at: www.girlsofinnovation.com

About The Connecticut Technology Council

The Connecticut Technology Council is the state's industry association for the technology sector. CTC's mission is to “connect people, ideas and opportunities to the global technology and innovation community.” CTC provides members with business assistance and specialized programs, in addition to promoting and supporting public policies that position Connecticut to have a globally recognized “culture of innovation” that helps attract great ideas and entrepreneurs to in turn develop new jobs and wealth for the state. www.ct.org

About The Connecticut Science Center

Opening Spring 2009, the Connecticut Science Center is bringing the world of science to the center of Connecticut. Innovative, hands-on exhibits and programs will come alive inside our stunning new building overlooking the Connecticut River in Hartford. As a must-see attraction for everyone, and an inspiring family learning destination, the Connecticut Science Center will be the place for people of all ages to Imagine, Discover, and Explore the world of science. www.ctsciencecenter.org

About Connecticut FIRST

Connecticut is home to nearly 170 teams which participate in the [FIRST](#) (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) robotics programs. *FIRST's* goal is to inspire in young people, their schools, and communities an appreciation of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to show them how an understanding of these fields can enrich their lives. The programs, which are offered for youth from ages 6 - high school, allow participants to work in teams (small “companies”) with adult mentors to design, build and program robots from a standard set of parts in a set timeframe to meet a common challenge.

All *FIRST* robotics program competitions are open to the public and admission is free. For more information about how you or your company can get involved in *FIRST* by starting, joining, or sponsoring a team, being an Event Sponsor or Supplier, or volunteering at an event, visit www.usfirst.org/involved or contact the CT Regional Director, Sue Glasspiegel: sglasspiegel@usfirst.org.